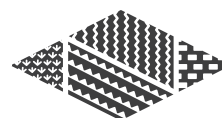
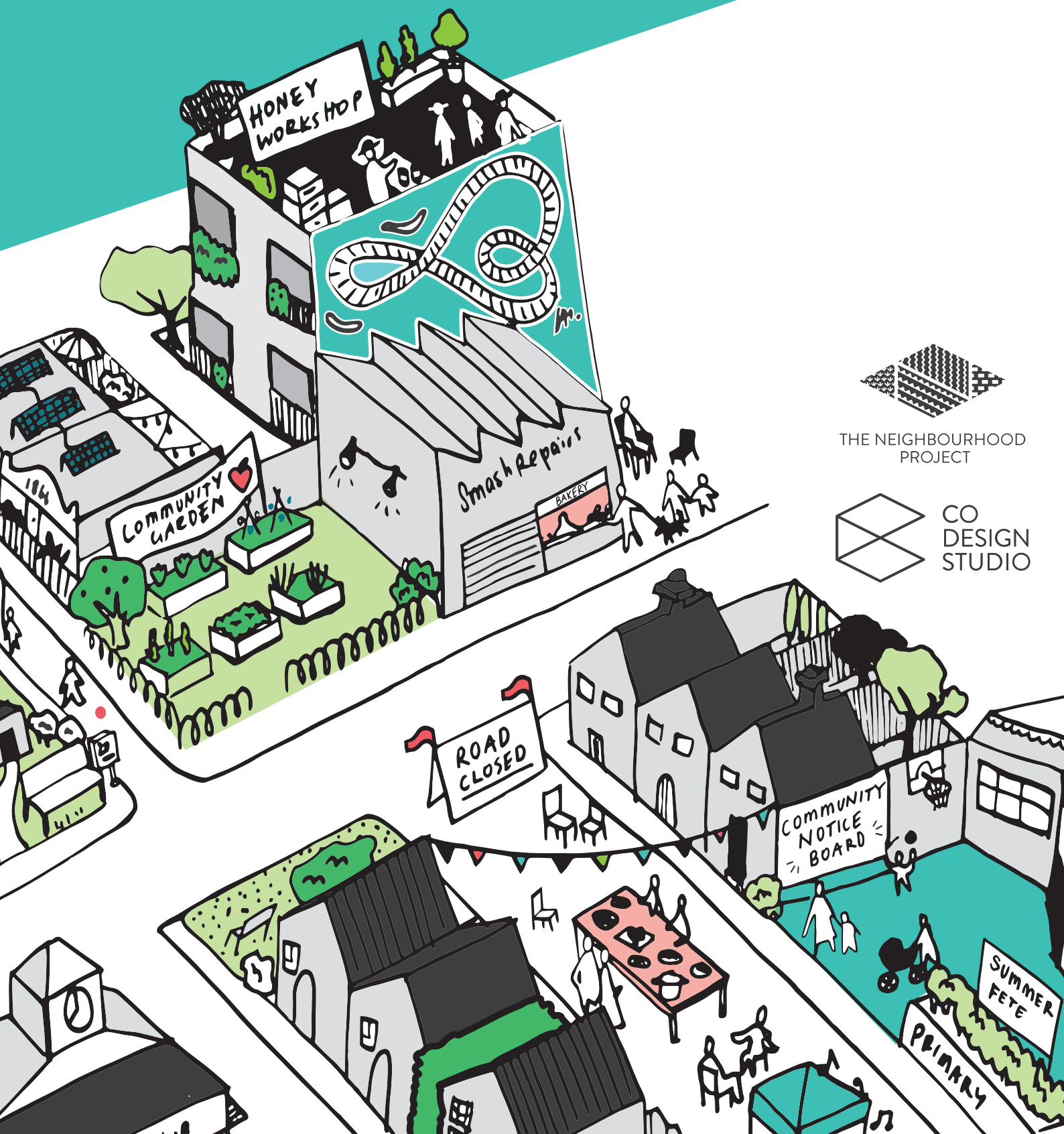


NEIGHBOURHOODS MADE BY NEIGHBOURS

GUIDE TO COMMUNITY-LED PLACEMAKING

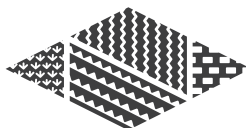
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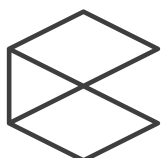
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PROJECT



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FOREWORD

This reference guide overviews a best-practice approach to community-led placemaking as based on the key learnings of The Neighbourhood Project. The practical tips and theoretical insights, combined with real-life project examples, are included to inspire you to take action in your own local area.

Over the past decade CoDesign Studio has pioneered placemaking practice and theory from our base in Melbourne, Australia. With roots in tactical urbanism and strategic experience in over 120 neighbourhoods, we have developed a new vision for collaborative approaches to shaping local places. One of these methods is community-led placemaking.


The evidenced ideas outlined in this guide will provide you with a fundamental understanding of delivering local projects whether you represent your community, council, place management, design firm, built environment firm, or a consultancy. The core principles included herein underpin local projects for all stakeholder perspectives.

This guide is part three of the three-part Locally-Led Neighbourhoods series:

- > Neighbourhoods Made By Neighbours: A guide to community-led placemaking
- > Neighbourhoods Made By Neighbours: Case studies from round 2 of The Neighbourhood Project
- > Locally-led Neighbourhoods: A community-led placemaking manual

Additional resources available include:

- > The Neighbourhood Project: Methodology white paper
- > The Neighbourhood Project: Outcomes & Impact at a Glance

A close-up photograph of a man's torso and arms. He is wearing a white polo shirt with thin black horizontal stripes. He is smiling and holding a small, dark-colored fish in his right hand. In the foreground, there is a blue swimming pool. The background is a clear blue sky and a wooden fence.

**PLACEMAKING IS ENABLING
AND EMPOWERING PEOPLE
TO CREATE PLACES THEY LOVE
AND FEEL CONNECTED TO**

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THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT

The knowledge in these pages is based on the key learnings of The Neighbourhood Project.

The Neighbourhood Project was a three-year action-research program run by CoDesign Studio to road test practical strategies for developing best-practice community-led placemaking strategies and then embedding the process with local councils and communities.

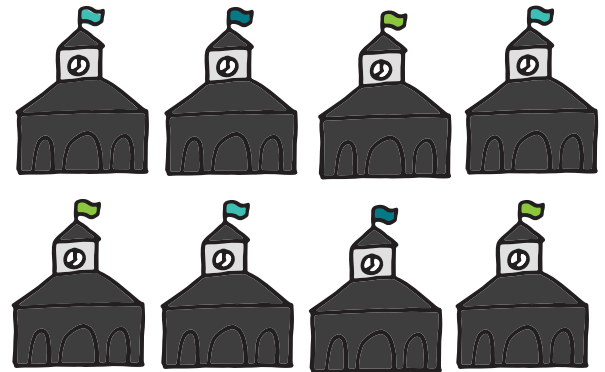
Funded by The Myer Foundation and run in partnership with Resilient Melbourne with support from the Municipal Association of Victoria, CoDesign Studio collaborated with eight local governments across Melbourne, Australia, to conduct nine pilot projects over three rounds from 2015-2018.

Responding to community and council frustrations of red tape, which often makes it difficult for local community members to deliver place improvements in their own neighbourhoods while also preventing councils from working effectively with their local constituents, The Neighbourhood Project sought to find a new collaborative pathway.

Using prototyping and short-term activations as a low-risk testing environment, coupled with a leadership program filled with workshops, bootcamps and capacity-building for both council and community, placemaking barriers were systemically identified, reviewed and streamlined for the future.

Now with a proven track record across eight local government areas and nine neighbourhoods, empowering more than 100 local community leaders and reaching almost 60,000 event attendees, we are confident that community-led placemaking can be used as a powerful tool for enabling better process for better long-term community benefits.

With social isolation on the rise, loneliness reaching epidemic proportions, and health and wellbeing becoming major concerns as rapid urbanisation unfolds, now is the time for building healthier, more connected, and more resilient neighbourhoods through community-led placemaking.



8 COUNCILS



9 NEIGHBOURHOODS



**100 COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED
THROUGH TRAINING** * Results as of June 2017

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-LED PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking is the process by which a place is designed, built, activated, or managed for effective, positive impact on the social, cultural, environmental and economic value of that place.

Originating in human-centred design and grassroots activism of the 1960's, what began as a philosophy soon became a movement. Designing places for people, and involving local people in that process, is still a philosophy that requires reinforcement in the built environment industry today. At CoDesign Studio, we believe that people must be at the centre of shaping thriving places.

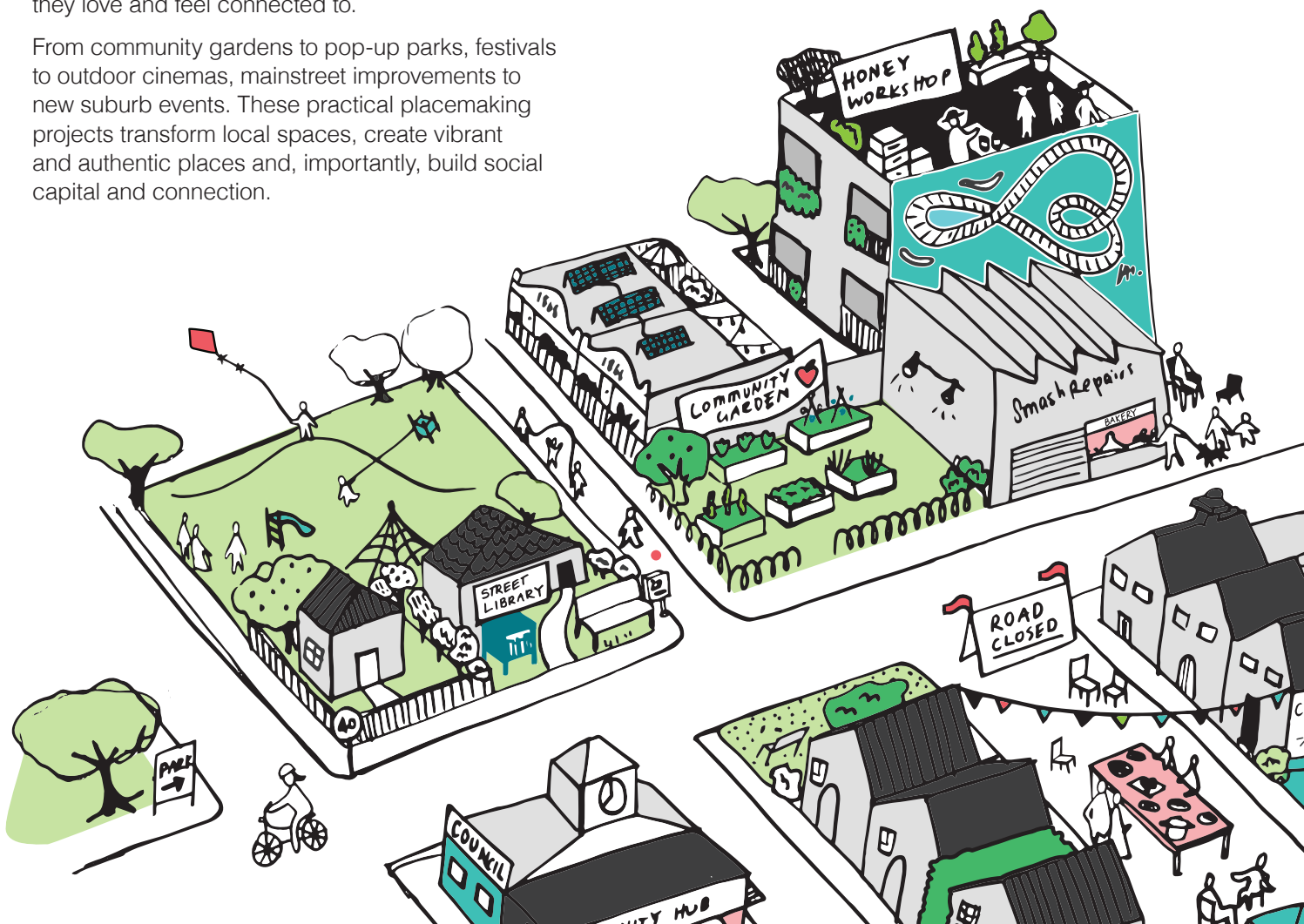
Over the past 10 years, placemaking has spread further through the development of methodologies for best-practice delivery of on-the-ground action to improve a place. Community-led placemaking is one particular methodology.

Led by CoDesign Studio in Australia, community-led placemaking refers to a program that actively enables local citizens to lead their own projects within an enabling government environment set up by the local council or the governing authority. The process enables and empowers people to create and activate places they love and feel connected to.

From community gardens to pop-up parks, festivals to outdoor cinemas, mainstreet improvements to new suburb events. These practical placemaking projects transform local spaces, create vibrant and authentic places and, importantly, build social capital and connection.

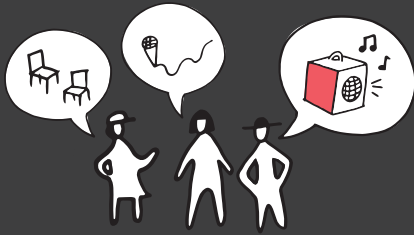
Unlike traditional urban activations, these projects are self-organised by the community, rather than being hosted or provided by local governance. By empowering the community to take the lead, this approach leverages local strengths-based assets, and unlocks local community buy-in. This means that the ideas and projects created reflect local needs, local character and local identity.

What's more, community-led placemaking leaves a legacy that leads to resilience. The unlocked social capital, community connection, and neighbourly activations leads to projects that are more likely to be sustainable in the long term. Engaged local groups and individuals are uncovered and empowered to run and manage place programs, a resourcing aspect of projects which is often difficult for budget- and time-restricted councils to overcome.



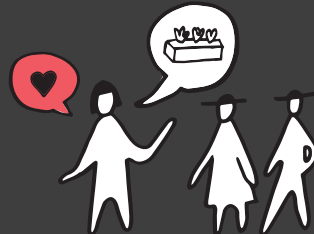
FAST FACTS

Here are six fast facts you should know about the benefits of community-led placemaking and how it works. (If you only read one page, make it this one!)



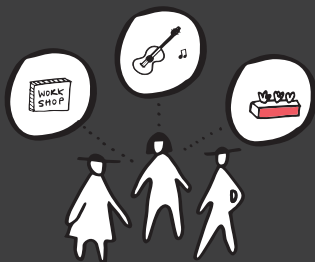
1 Community-led placemaking is an asset or strengths-based approach to shaping neighbourhoods.

Rather than making assumptions about what a neighbourhood needs based on best-practices from other locations, it focuses on uncovering local talent, ideas and capacity that are specific to your locale. This (often untapped) resource contributes to building thriving neighbourhoods in a sustainable way. It's less about engaging with local communities about placemaking and more about inspiring them to do-it-themselves.



2 Community-led placemaking increases social capital.

When communities are empowered to shape local neighbourhoods, they have greater voice, influence and stronger local connections. This leads to a unique sense of place that inspires others to join, and a reputation that spreads by word of mouth. Neighbourhoods that have higher levels



3 Community-led placemaking is a tool for accelerating community building, particularly in new communities such as urban redevelopment or greenfield areas.

Local public spaces are something that everyone has in common. Activating these spaces with local ideas has an effective community building function. For example, more than two-thirds of groups that participated in The Neighbourhood Project went on to incorporate and continue to run their own projects.



4 The three inseparable principles of community-led placemaking are People, Process, and Place.

These can also be described as the physical attributes of a place (place), the social attributes including programs and activities (people) and the governing systems, management, trust, risk and permitting processes (process). Process is often the most overlooked but critical to achieving long-lasting legacy for place value.



5 Community-led placemaking is a movement for everyone that can be led by anyone.

Local citizens have a role to play in stepping up and coming forward with ideas, committing to organising, volunteer management and maintenance. Local governments and place managers equally have a critical role to play. Community-led projects cannot exist without an enabling environment and supportive pathway to success.



6 You can rapidly move toward becoming more community-led by using low-risk trials.

Tactical urbanism, pop-ups and other prototypes provide a short-term, low-cost mechanism to not just activate spaces, but more critically to discover and build on the assets and skills in your community and organisation, while also uncovering red tape and process barriers which can then be reviewed and amended to create a more enabling environment.

“THE GREATEST BENCHMARK OF PLACEMAKING SUCCESS: LOCAL PEOPLE CAN SEE THEIR FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER IT.”

VALLI MORPHETT, CEO CODESIGN STUDIO

WHY IT MATTERS?

Neighbourhoods made by neighbours improve places while building community.

Whether your goal is to improve walkability, boost local trade, design for beautification, green a concrete-jungle, or a whole host of other place motivations, community-led placemaking is a tried and tested method for unlocking long term community benefits in your neighbourhood.

Remembering that placemaking is enabling and empowering people to create places they love and feel connected to, it is right to adopt a practice that allows people to contribute to their own local places, creating them to be more connected, vibrant, resilient, and sustainable.

Here are some of the core benefits that can be unlocked by the power of community-led placemaking.



Do more with less

Leverage local resources instead of relying on council or developers. Community-led projects create sustainable places through upcycling and resource sharing.



Build social connection

Social connection is a vital ingredient of quality of life, health, and happiness. Evidence has shown social isolation is a larger health risk than smoking and alcohol (Kelly, 2014), and Australians' social isolation is growing. One in three Australians don't know their neighbours (Mackay, 2017). Local projects provide an approachable way for people to come together.



Build resilience, not just places

Community-led placemaking builds social connections and trust, and it builds them around our homes. This is where resilience begins. The Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities initiative defines resilience as “the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” Community-led places build more resilient neighbourhoods.



Accelerate community building

Local events, activities and projects bring people together around a common goal. This builds community quickly leading to happier, healthier residents.



Build positive council-community relationships

Working together on common projects builds a positive image of council and strengthens trust and relationships between top-down decision makers and local residents.



Shape places with personality

No more homogeneity or “cookie-cutter” ideas. Community-led projects respond to local interests, values, and lifestyles, leaving local places covered with the fingerprints of being shaped by their local people.



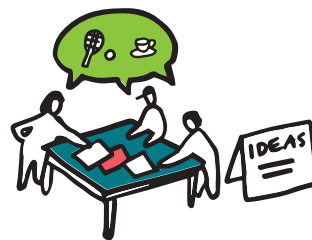
Leave a legacy

Community-led projects empower locals with confidence and skills so they can lead long-term. Prototypes and pop-ups often lead to longer term installations and can be used to validate community buy-in for longer term developments such as capital works funding or ongoing place programming.



Speeding up change to meet rapid urban growth

Urban policy is notoriously slow to shift. Community-led placemaking is a way to speed up this transition by testing new ideas at a small scale. This way, roadblocks can be identified and addressed in a low-risk environment. By embedding the best of these discoveries as standard practice, council and industry can be more agile in responding to change.



Participatory and collaborative city-making

A key opportunity of 21st century citymaking is the trend towards participatory design (e.g. New Urban Agenda, 2016). Community-led placemaking offers new ways for citizens to participate in shaping neighbourhoods, and also provides a template for industry, council, and other stakeholders to engage with community members in a collaborative way.

SHAPING GREAT PLACES

Through our research, we have established that placemaking success is pinned on three key principles of place change. These are: People, Process, and Place.

Traditionally, many projects only actively involve one or two of these ingredients, however we have found the decision to strategically involve all three delivers ongoing, even self-sustaining, benefits for community. This is how community-led placemaking drives systemic change for neighbourhoods and cities more broadly.

These changes are not always easy, but they are worth it. These three principles plus a big dash of leadership and innovation, will help communities and councils to identify and implement changes to make a difference.

PEOPLE

Activating local citizenship around community-led placemaking.

Community-led placemaking starts and ends with the people who share a neighbourhood. Local leadership, ideas, enthusiasm, skills, and knowledge are what set these projects apart from standard industry-delivered improvements which lack local ownership, and can often remain unactivated.

Capacity-building at a local level goes beyond community engagement. Instead, it creates agency, connection, capability and mobility, which pay significant dividends when it comes to building the physical and social fabric of a neighbourhood.

PROCESS

Facilitating an enabling environment in support of community-led placemaking.

The processes that shape and control neighbourhoods have enormous impact on how they operate. They can limit community agency, or enhance it. Simple innovations, such as reviewing permitting processes or elevating the importance and understanding of placemaking within an organisation can have enormous impact on how communities benefit.

For councils, improving the process will make it easier and less risky to say yes to great community ideas. This unlocks community energy to tackle issues locally, helping council workers to deliver great neighbourhoods and social outcomes. It has also been shown to improve staff morale and community trust in council (The Neighbourhood Project, Evaluation Round 1).

PLACE

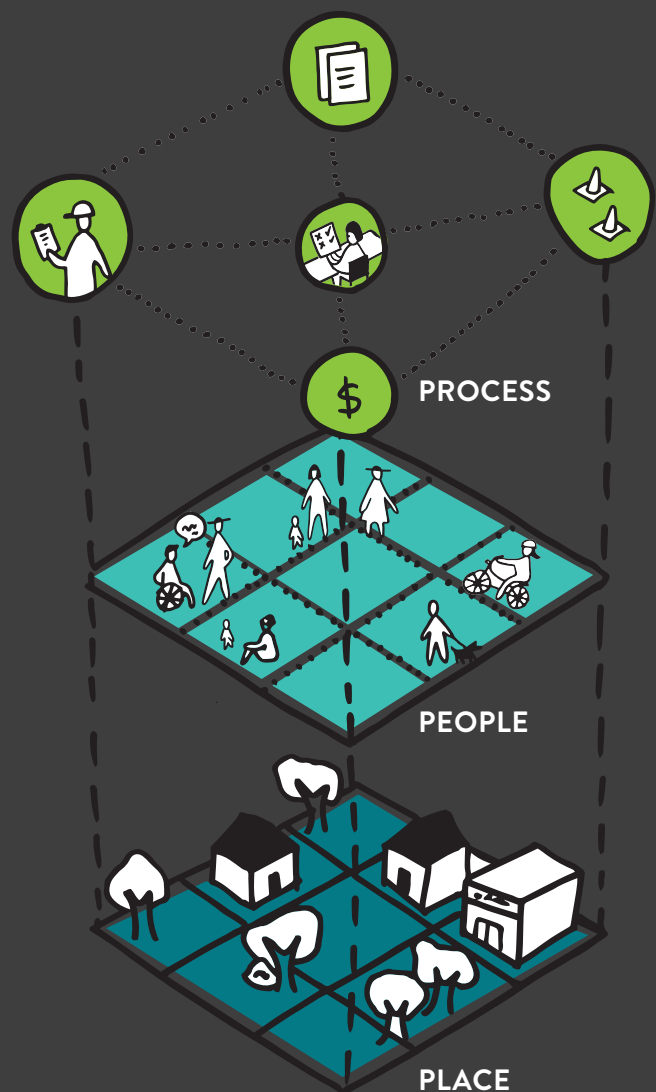
How do we use a space? How do we feel connected to a space?

These are two key questions to address when looking at the principle of how best to design, build, activate, or manage a place.

Next time you move through your neighbourhood, look carefully – there are many pockets of underused land that could work harder for you and your neighbours. One report estimates up to 30% of land in Australian cities is underutilised (The Economist, 2015). This represents significant opportunity to use these spaces for community benefit and share some of the load of creating great neighbourhoods.

How do your neighbours feel about their physical public spaces? Neighbourhood pride and local social cohesion often go hand-in-hand with vibrant, culturally-relevant, activated spaces.

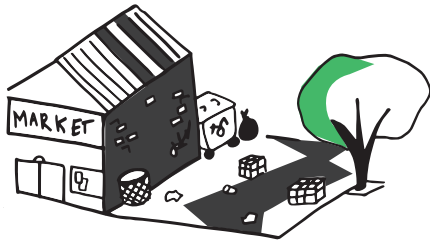
When projects are led by locals, there is a greater alignment between the place identity and the identity of the local residents. The best part is that short-term community-led projects can kickstart getting this type of place connection in motion in the first place.



WHAT CAN IT LOOK LIKE?

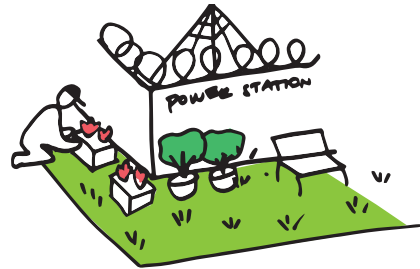
Community-led placemaking looks like projects dreamed up, designed, and delivered by locals to improve their neighbourhood. It's a collaboration between neighbours, community leaders, volunteers, organisations and businesses, as well as council and other land managers such as property developers, utilities, and state government.

Here are some top project categories for effective community-led placemaking:



New uses for underutilised space

Give underused local space a second life with a new use or amenity, like a dog park, playground, or gathering place.



Greening projects

Reclaim local space for gardeners to grow food, bring cultures together, support sustainability and biodiversity, or simply create a beautiful street.



Regular events

Build stronger community connections and pride, make places more lively, and provide an activity for locals to meet new neighbours. Events also help people see the potential in underutilised places long after the marquee is folded away.



Creative projects

Change the feel of an area and create a sense of place identity, pride, and ownership. Artwork, creative wayfinding and beautification can encourage people to visit and linger.



Food and Markets

Bring the community together around a shared table in a park or showcase local talent and produce with a market.



Sharing initiatives

Share skills and resources such as materials, tools, seeds or toys between neighbours.

COMMON BARRIERS

The most common barriers to effective placemaking, as identified through The Neighbourhood Project, align with the three CoDesign Studio drivers of place change: People, Process and Place.

Low-cost, small-scale, locally-led projects are the key to community-led placemaking. They provide a low-risk way of testing ideas and bringing the community together. They also highlight the barriers that prevent local community members from having greater empowerment in shaping their places.

Red-tape barriers can prevent local residents from feeling enabled to create change in their neighbourhoods. Although well-intentioned, council processes and policies for managing risk, insurance and events can inadvertently strip local communities of their capacity to lead.

Concurrently, there are a number of roadblocks that prevent councils from feeling empowered to collaborate with their local residents effectively, and siloed teams can make cross-departmental communications difficult. Even the most motivated local residents and council managers can become disenchanted quickly when it comes to navigating permits, insurances, multiple departments, and sign-offs to try something new.



Process barriers

Only 35% of people trust local council (Philipson, 2018).

Local councils have enormous capacity to champion community-led placemaking and are often the greatest advocates. A lack of clear process around where placemaking sits within the organisation and which permits are needed can make community-led projects unnecessarily complicated, expensive or time-consuming. Leverage community-led placemaking to identify and rectify placemaking process. Then, take it further up the chain and seek to embed practice by addressing needs at a policy, framework and strategy level.



People barriers

Two-thirds of Australians don't trust their neighbours (Price, 2005).

Communities coming together to shape local neighbourhoods is not always a smooth and aligned process. There are often competing ideas, divergent views, and multiple perspectives on priorities; and this is if the community members have a catalyst for coming together in the first place. A guided program can help navigate this tricky area for both council and community.

Another key people barrier is the current low rates of local social connection. This lack of social fabric inhibits a person's sense of permission to act and must be repaired in order to uncover the social capital required to deliver local projects for place improvement.



Place barriers

30% of space is vacant or underutilised (The Economist, 2015).

Our local places are bursting with opportunity. However, it can be hard to envision actual change occurring when the challenge ahead seems so large. A vacant field could be used for myriad activities, all of which might require significant capital works investment, co-ordination of multiple government agencies, long-term council staff resourcing, and outside design consultants.

Communities should be encouraged to have the big ideas, but then workshop them into short-term, low-cost trials. Not only does this gauge community buy-in, it also allows for pivoting and adaptation in response to what works and what needs revision. For example, while a pop-up trial might originate as a test for beautifying an underutilised park, it might actually uncover accessibility issues or safety concerns as the true source of underutilisation.

PEOPLE | PRINCIPLES

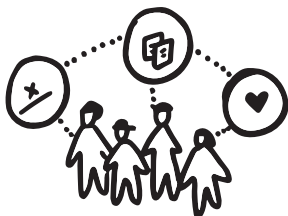


1. Start with local ideas rather than a plan

It is often difficult for local residents to envisage how planning strategies or masterplans benefit them. From a body of research by CoDesign Studio with 40 local community organisations, 'relevance' was the number one factor for why people do not participate in local planning.

Instead of inviting communities into an externally-led planning process, an alternative approach is to ask communities for their ideas. Local residents are the best people to identify improvements, place needs, community needs and ideas for neighbourhoods; after all, they live their lives there every day.

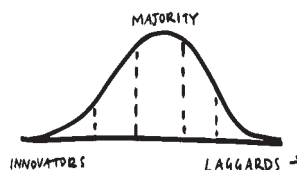
Invite expressions of interest and ideas for local neighbourhoods, or host ideation workshops to foster ideas together. These can make for a great starting point for a community-led program.



2. Mobilise around early innovators

You don't have to mobilise an entire community right off the bat. A more effective route is to work with innovators and early adopters who have already begun to take action in your local area. This means identifying and empowering the local leaders that exist in every community.

Follow the energy. Local leaders will often have strong local networks which can quickly build momentum for a project. Once the early adopters are on board, the majority can rapidly follow and before you know it, a community begins to mobilise.



3. Create agency to enable long-term change

Most community-led placemaking projects don't fall over at the beginning or even during a project activation, they fall over at the end. Volunteers burn out, groups don't agree or no one has thought through how the place will be maintained or the event managed.

Planning for community governance and strengthening the agency of local groups to work together is important to plan for from the beginning. This can include simple tips for goal setting, holding meetings, defining roles, decision making, dispute resolution and project planning.



4. Strengthen community-council relationships by working together

Changing how we make neighbourhoods starts with changing how we work together. This particularly relates to community-council relationships. One of the best ways to ensure community-led placemaking success is to build community-council trust. Communities have ideas, skills and resources to improve their neighbourhoods, but often lack knowledge of the requirements, and who to speak with at council for help.

Councils strive to support good social outcomes and community development, but letting the community lead can sometimes seem too risky. We encourage communities and councils to put on the 'hat' of the other party and consider things from their point of view. This builds empathy, trust and new ways of working together.

PEOPLE | CASE STUDIES



CARDINIA LAKES

Cardinia Shire Council saw an opportunity to develop a collaborative approach to new neighbourhood creation by testing out community-led placemaking in the new suburb of Cardinia Lakes in Melbourne's outer east. Infrastructure had been built here but the social fabric that binds a community had not been woven yet.

Neighbours needed an opportunity to meet with each other to build an identity for their brand-new community. Working with the council, the community took the lead in exploring ideas and running a series of local events to explore how these new residents would like to come together and create a new neighbourhood. Events included a local photography competition, artists mural walk and a pop-up cinema.

The projects gave emerging leaders a chance to shape their neighbourhood, and council a better understanding of how to create a pathway for those leaders to achieve this. The local leaders have quickly gone on to form an incorporated residents' association and are reaching out to even newer suburbs nearby to help them get started in creating their own neighbourhoods.

Council recognised the impact community-led placemaking had in accelerating community connection and are now working closely with CoDesign Studio, engaging us to build the learnings into an embedded business as usual model. The program has built community trust in the council and mobilised groups around a legacy of community building and placemaking in the Cardinia neighbourhood.

PROCESS | PRINCIPLES

Process is a critical component of community-led placemaking and often the hardest to achieve.

By definition, the process principle refers to the relationship between a community and a governing authority.

While 'community-led' may sound like 'community-only', governments and land managers have a serious role to play. These key players must understand how the community experiences navigating the system and seek to make it an easier process. Here are three ways to get started.



1. Establish an enabling environment that will support community leadership

Accepting community-led ideas within an existing structure or planning process can raise tricky questions around risk. Take a first step towards a smoother process by establishing an exploration zone within which an organisation can experiment with alternative approaches to collaboration, decision making and permitting.

In action this might look like nominating a particular street, site or neighbourhood in which experimentation can occur, or nominating a select community group to partner with on a series of trial projects. It could be as simple as deciding that a lighter approach to permitting would apply to smaller, short-term projects to enable non-permanent, temporary actions to take place.

Clear boundaries also make the process simpler for community members. This is a step towards empowering locals to shape their neighbourhoods.

An added bonus measured during The Neighbourhood Project, was that when councils actively sought to address placemaking process pathways, council staff experienced a positive morale boost from the cross-organisational collaboration and permission to explore creative solutions.



2. Create a 'yes' culture within council

When requests for out-of-the box community-led projects arrive at a council, the tendency can be to say 'no'. While this can be one way of dealing with perceived risk, the culture that comes with this attitude can seriously undermine a communities' capacity to lead. Many give up at the first hurdle, meaning that communities and councils alike miss out on the potential positive place changes at hand.

Once boundaries for an enabling environment are established, it is important to support a culture that actively tackles the grey areas in an attempt to get to 'yes'. While there is no set formula for what a 'yes' culture looks like, it primarily means the default position is to try to say 'yes' and then work with the community to reframe and restructure their idea into a form that can receive the official go ahead. This approach builds collaboration and trust for both parties involved.



3. Encourage cross-organisational collaboration by establishing a placemaking leadership team

Placemaking touches on many aspects of council – from open space and events, to local laws and community development. Resultantly, placemaking often does not have a home department.

When community members are required to liaise with multiple departments for different needs, and there is no central place, person, or framework to guide this process, then community-led projects can quickly be abandoned. A clear line of communication can make it much more straightforward for community members to navigate the system and fast-track their project into reality.

One way to do this is by establishing a cross-council placemaking leadership team (or an individual council placemaking champion). This makes it simpler for communities to navigate process. Interestingly, the champions of community-led placemaking within council are often not the open space or community development teams as you might expect, but rather the local laws officers, events teams or even front-desk community service staff.

PROCESS | CASE STUDIES



WHITEHORSE

Three events were arranged by council in partnership with their local community to activate the Box Hill Mall. A pop-up art studio, an outdoor cinema with local food, and a public space garden installation were conducted along with a summer-long program of community-delivered workshops.

Driving internal process changes at council to support community-led placemaking was an important priority of the City of Whitehorse when they took part in The Neighbourhood Project in 2015/2016. Enthusiastic cross-organisational support was garnered for community ideas including a cross-council working group.

Drawing on their lessons learned during the project, such as how to support community placemaking prototypes, the council went on to develop a community-led placemaking guide and materials for regular use with community-led projects.



POINT COOK

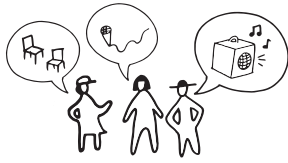
The community is often the stakeholder best placed to fill the gaps that were not met previously by traditional planning and infrastructure. Point Cook Town Centre had everything a town needed on paper, but according to local residents, it lacked a heart.

Point Cook Action Group wanted to bring the community back into the heart of the city. With Australia's highest rate of online shoppers at the time, their plan was to encourage shoppers back onto the street with a seven-week pop-up park and entertainment program to boost local economy.

Supporting this project took council on a journey where they discovered just how challenging closing a street, even temporarily, can be. Especially when money did not abound and trained traffic managers were few and far between.

After observing the huge impact that community leaders can achieve when provided with the right opportunity and an enabling environment, Wyndham City Council has been encouraged to let communities lead their own festivals and create new pathways to 'yes' in their process.

PLACE | PRINCIPLES

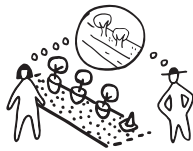


1. Build on local strengths and assets, and work with what you have

The secret of a sustainable community-led project is that the energy, expertise and resources come from within the community itself – an approach called asset-based community development (ABCD).

This fosters a sense of local ownership and pride in projects, while unveiling and amplifying local strengths and character. This is also an opportunity to reach out to locals who are new, marginalised, or isolated, giving them the opportunity to share their skills with the community in a positive way.

With resources continually stretched, unlocking the community's ability to leverage their own resources can reduce expenditure and build sustainable outcomes. Councils should explore what resources, assets and skills they are best placed to offer the community, such as funding, leftover materials, connections, and expertise.



2. Learn by doing

When testing a new idea, project, process, or service, try before you buy. See if it works and identify the best approach before committing too much time, funding and effort.

Overly ambitious projects not only lead to burnout but create a risk by putting all of the energy behind a single idea that may not work. A prototype is a small-scale test of an idea. It allows you to gather evidence to advocate for longer-term projects. In neighbourhoods this is called tactical urbanism (Lydon, 2015), but you can also prototype permits and processes to reduce the risk of trying new ways of working.

These lighter, quicker, cheaper projects spark discussions about the future of the neighbourhood, flush out supporters to reduce your workload, and allow you to gather data and feedback (Project for Public Spaces, 2011). It may not all run smoothly the first time around, but you will learn from what went wrong, adapt, and refine the idea in the next round.



3. Benchmark places and measure outcomes

One of the end-games of placemaking is more active places for people. The key benefits of short-term trials and smaller scale, community-led projects are that they provide the stepping stones for getting there.

To understand if and what parts of the project have been a success, it's important to benchmark the current use and activity of the site. How has it changed through your project or intervention?

When benchmarking the site, consider the site context – what is it near or connected to? Consider how it is currently used - undertake site observations to look at how the site is used, where people walk, stand and sit. How many people? Do they stay or just walk through? Also, consider how people feel about the site – do they notice it? Do they like it? Do they feel safe and comfortable here?

There are a range of existing approaches to measuring places both quantitatively and qualitatively. We will be unpacking these as part of future guides. When choosing a method, key considerations for community-led placemaking are:

- > What's the long-term goal you're looking to achieve?
- > How simple is the data to collect?
- > Can community members collect the data themselves?

PLACE | CASE STUDIES



FAWKNER

Fawkner Food Bowls is a community market-garden built on a disused bowls green. A place that was once used as a sporting facility, now has a different use, purpose, and structure, that aligns with the current needs of the neighbourhood.

Fawkner Food Bowls started with a local resident inquiring about what was happening with a bowls green that had not been used for over 10 years. She suggested it be turned into a community garden and thankfully did not give up after initially being told the space was for sports and recreation.

A councillor heard her idea, connected her with another like-minded local and they applied for The Neighbourhood Project. Perfectly timed with some other council planning occurring in the area, the project fast became a flagship community-led program for Moreland City Council's Food System Strategy.

The group has worked with the bowls club and local community to reactivate the space and give the growing Fawkner community a place to learn new skills, access fresh produce and even have a game of social bowls.



BROOKLYN

The Brooklyn community was in two minds about having a dog park. Some residents were excited about the prospect of having somewhere local to take their dogs and a place to meet friends, while others were concerned about noise and losing valuable park space.

As participants of The Neighbourhood Project, a local community group trialled a pop-up dog park to test out the idea and gauge the residents' responses to this different use of the space.

The temporary park was overwhelmingly well received. Importantly, the trial also provided a chance to explore local residents concerns in an active and tangible way and adapt bigger plans accordingly. As a result, council was able to move ahead with plans for a permanent dog park after many years of deliberation.

Community-led placemaking can be used as a catalyst, providing an evidence-based path for permanent change.

GET INSPIRED

Examples of temporary placemaking projects trialled through The Neighbourhood Project:



Main street activation

Breathing new life into local retail areas with new signage, art and creative projects.



Play streets

Reprogram streets into spaces for play and healthy activity through temporary closures.



Verge greening

Transform local nature strips into flourishing gardens.



Pop-up parks

Temporary transformation of streets and underutilised spaces. This could mean closing a street, or transforming an underutilised space.



Parklets

Micro-parks, often no bigger than a car parking space, that create new green spaces and make neighbourhoods friendlier for local residents.



Markets

Local markets are an important part of public spaces and an opportunity to showcase local talent and produce.



Planting and greening

Transform underutilised parks or streets with trees and planting.



Events in public spaces

From yoga to picnics in the park, local events are critical to shaping vibrant places.



Community art

Enable the community to put their fingerprints on new and existing places through local art.



Outdoor cinema

Quickly transform an open or underutilised space with outdoor cinema events.



Dog parks

Caring for four legged friends can also be a great way to build community.



Signage and way-finding

Personalised way-finding creates a specific identity and points out what locals know. This could help children walk to school, discover local shops or just encourage people to walk more.



LEAVE A LEGACY

The end goal of all community-led placemaking is to leave behind a legacy. Ongoing, self-sustaining benefits for the community can be unlocked when locals are empowered to lead the way.

Throughout our experience we have observed myriad ways that community-led placemaking opens up a pathway to new opportunities for both council and community.

Examples of legacy include: new relationships and networks; new skills; physical changes to the neighbourhood; plans for the next neighbourhood project, potentially with leftover grant funding; simpler council processes; a redesigned permit; adjustments to policy; and a culture of collaboration and experimentation.

Set yourself on the path to legacy-building by using these examples to set goals, project outcomes, and a framework for measuring success early on.

Evaluation at the end of a project is critical to ensuring that the learnings can be taken and reapplied to the next project for ongoing success. After completing a project, reflect on what happened, what the impact was, and ideas about what happens next.

Be sure to collect enough data, survey feedback, photos and stories to make the case for change. Include all the key stakeholders by getting council staff and community members together to reflect about what made project delivery difficult or easy, and how it could be done better next time.

This can take leadership and delicacy however it is also a natural next step if you have already been working together, building on strengths, creating an enabling environment, and learning by doing.

And remember, even when a project might look like it has 'failed' on a first attempt, it is still a vital part of the creative process to achieving a legacy. Failures, prototypes, and early attempts, lead to growth, learnings and an identification of what could be changed moving forward.

Leaving a legacy is about engaging all three CoDesign Studio pillars: People, Process and Place. This method of community-led placemaking means that a place has not simply been changed on the surface, but deeper systemic change can be catalysed, all the while building local capacity for leadership.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Congratulations on reading this first induction into the fundamentals of community-led placemaking. We want to empower you to put this knowledge into action.

Here's how:

- > CoDesign Studio delivers online education and face-to-face training to empower government, industry and community to create positive social change in their environments.
- > The Neighbourhood Project full publication series is available online.
- > We also have a series of digital tools and online resources, specifically designed to equip you at each step of the way from generating your next bright idea through to delivering a project on the ground.

Feeling inspired? Head to www.codesignstudio.com.au to sign up for online training or free webinars, purchase a corporate training package, or use our online digital tools.

STAY IN TOUCH

To learn more about CoDesign Studio and how we work with councils, developers, and community-leaders, sign up to our newsletter and read our service menu at www.codesignstudio.com.au



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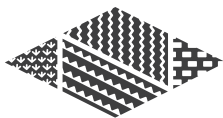


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